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ENGLISH

APPROVAL OF UNDP ASSISTANCE TO A PROJECT OF ECUADOR

IPF:(1992-1996) $ 11 273 000

(ECU/92/011) - Support to the Implementation of the National Health Plan: Basic Health and Sanitation Services

Date of approval by the AC:1/	16 December 1992
Expected duration:	84 months
Proposed executing agency:	Government
Government implementing agency:	Government agencies/local NGOs
Government cost sharing:	$ 3 024 000
Total UNDP budget:	$ 3 024 000

Project background

Overall health status in Ecuador still ranks among the lowest in Latin America, comparing unfavourably with countries of similar per capita income, despite major improvements in conventional health indicators over the last two decades. The cholera epidemic, which is currently sweeping through several Latin American countries is affecting all age groups with more than 13.000 cases and 220 deaths reported in 1991. Infant mortality continues relatively high at 44 per 1,000 live births in 1989; and primary causes of infant and child mortality are poor environmental conditions (lack of access to safe water and sanitation services), infectious diseases, and malnutrition. Malnutrition is a serious health problem. Around 55 per cent of children under five years of age suffer from chronic malnutrition which leads to about 4 out of 10 deaths occurring in this age group. The main causes are inadequate food intake, poor feeding practices, and high prevalence of infectious diseases. Access to basic health and sanitation services is severely limited for about 50 percent of the population with water supply coverage of 35 per cent in the rural areas and 8 per cent of the rural population having access to adequate sewerage facilities.

As indicated above, the improvement of basic sanitation services is a necessary complement to the provision of primary health care and targeted nutrition supplements for achieving reduced mortality and morbidity. It is, however, evident from studies carried out in the country that tests will have to be conducted on different models for decentralized organizational forms of service delivery in order to gain the experience for introducing the necessary reforms in the institutional structure emphasizing sustainability and the effective use of facilities.

The Government of Ecuador has prepared a comprehensive National Health Plan which seeks to expand and strengthen basic health services, including nutrition and basic sanitation,

1/ This Fact Sheet reflects the status of the project/revision at the time it was approved by the Action Committee; modifications to the project/revision may have occurred subsequently.

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and enhance the decision-making process and management of public institutions involved in the delivery of basic health, nutrition and sanitation services. To this end it has requested technical and financial assistance from UN agencies such as UNDP and PAHO. UNFPA is funding maternal care and family planning activities at the national level and reproductive health services for adolescents in various cities of the country. UNICEF has promoted activities oriented to reduce infant mortality through increased coverage of children's health and nutrition services. PAHO has contributed with technical cooperation in several health areas: control of contagious diseases, drugs and vaccines, development of health services and the MOH's institutional development. WFP is providing food assistance for mother and children of low-income groups of Ecuador. Additionally, the World Bank has agreed to fund a major project "Strengthening and Expansion of Basic Health Services in Ecuador" (FASBASE) in the amount of (US)$70 million to support the National Health Plan.

Description of project

The development objective of the project is to assist in the implementation of the National Health Plan through the expansion of coverage and strengthening of its capacity to provide basic health and sanitation services to the predominantly rural impoverished groups currently not receiving services.

The immediate objectives of the project are to: (a) strengthen MOH and IEOS to facilitate access of the rural population to safe water and sanitation services testing four different decentralized arrangements with strong community participation to a target population of 172.000 in 165 communities; (b) expand coverage and improve quality of the MOH centres' basic health services through an adequate provision of medical, office, computer and logistic equipment to an estimated 2 million inhabitants in the six provinces covered by the project; and (c) contribute to the institutional development of MOH and IEOS through the design and installation of an adequate management information system (MIS), including training for its use.

Project activities will include: (a) organization and implementation of alternative models for sanitation service delivery in the six provinces; (b) evaluation of their respective advantages and proposal for one/more models to be applied to the rest of the country; preparing a proposal for a reorganization of the sanitation subsector; (d) design and documentation of medical, odontological, and office equipment to the health centres of the six provinces; and (e) design and installation of management information system as a component part of a viable decentralization scheme for MOH/IEOS.

Inputs

UNDP will provide international consultants (22 man-months), national consultants and support personnel (97 man-months); a subcontract for operation and maintenance of MIS; six subcontracts with NGOs for technical studies and evaluation of basic sanitation models; and medical, odontological, office and computer equipment locally procured.

Financial data

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Personnel	390 900
Subcontract	848 200
Equipment	1 784 900
Total	3 024 000

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